

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-03 SP-02 INR-05

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01 AF-04 EA-06 NEA-07 EUR-08 SY-02

MCT-01 USSS-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 /065 W

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O R 071240Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3509

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L GEORGETOWN 2009

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (LIMDIS CAPTION ADDED)

CARACAS FOR LEGATT

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR GY CU

SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH BURNHAM OCTOBER 6

REF: GEO 2006

SUMMARY: DURING A CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER
BURNHAM OCT 6, I DISCUSSED ALLEGATIONS OF A U.S.-
INSPIRED ASSASSINATION PLOT AGAINST BURNHAM,
CUBAN EXILE ACTIVITIES, AND U.S. EFFORTS LAST MONTH
TO PROVIDE HIM, THROUGH FONMIN WEILLS, INFORMATION
ABOUT THE EXILE GROUPS. BURNHAM EXPRESSED
APPRECIATION FOR U.S. ATTENTION AND ESPECIALLY
FOR THE ASSURANCES THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY
SHLAUDEMAN HAD GIVEN WILLS IN NEW YORK. AS OF
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NOON OCT 6, BURNHAM APPEARED REASSURED ABOUT

U.S. INTENTIONS TOWARD HIS GOVERNMENT. THE CUBAN AIRLINER CRASH THAT AFTERNOON, HOWEVER, APPEARS TO HAVE STIMULATED HIS SUPICIONS ANEW (SEPTEL FOLLOWS). END SUMMARY.

1. I CALLED PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM'S OFFICE SEPT 28 TO REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT AND RECEIVED THE ANSWER THAT HIS SCHEDULE WAS FULLY BOOKED FOR OVER A WEEK BUT HE WOULD TRY TO WORK ME INTO HIS SCHEDULE. YESTERDAY (OCT 6) HIS SECRETARY INFORMED ME I COULD SEE HIM THAT DAY AT 11:00 AM.

2. MY PURPOSE IN REQUESTING THE MEETING WAS TO TRY TO DETERMINE, INDIRECTLY, WHETHER FONMIN WILLS HAD INFORMED BURNHAM ACCURATELY OF THE COOPERATION AND INFORMATION THE U.S. HAD PROVIDED LAST MONTH CONCERNING THE BOMBING OF THE GUYANESE CONSULATE, ASSESS BURNHAM'S CURRENT ATTITUDE ABOUT THE CUBAN EXILE ACTIVITIES AND ALLEGATIONS OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT, TRY TO REDUCE ANY SUSPICIONS HE STILL HAD OF USG INTENTIONS TOWARD GUYANA, AND FINALLY TO DISCUSS HIS ATTITUDE ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

3. I OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY SAYING THAT I APPRECIATED THE FACT THAT FRED WILLS AND HE HAD GIVEN US THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHECK OUT AND REFUTE THE ALLEGATIONS OF U.S. LINKS TO THE CUBAN EXILE TERRORIST GROUPS. I NOW HAD A COPY OF THE ARTICLE FROM "REVISTA DE AMERICA" ALLEGING THAT THERE WAS A U.S. ASSASSINATION PLOT DIRECTED AGAINST HIM. I SAID I THOUGHT HE WOULD AGREE THAT THE ARTICLE (PROVIDED BY ARA/CAR) CONSTITUTED EVIDENCE THAT SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO CAST SUSPICION ON THE UNITED STATES AND ADVERSELY AFFECT U.S.-GUYANESE RELATIONS. (NOTE: THE CLIPPING WAS TAKEN FROM "GRANMA" WHICH HAD REPRODUCED A PAGE FROM "REVISTA" CONTAINING A "PRENSA LATINA" REPORT QUOTING ALLEGED "GUYANESE INTELLIGENCE SERVICE" SOURCES THAT THE U.S. WAS PLOTTING TO ASSASSINATE CONFIDENTIAL

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BURNHAM.)

4. BURNHAM REACTED WITH SURPRISE TO THE "REVISTA" ARTICLE, BUT SEEMED RELUCTANT TO ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT THE CUBANS MIGHT HAVE FABRICATED THE STORY. HE SAID THAT NEITHER THE CUBANS NOR THE CHINESE HAD TRIED TO ARGUE THAT THE GOG SHOULD NOT HAVE FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE U.S., BUT THAT

HE COULD NOT SAY THE SAME ABOUT THE SOVIETS.
THEY SAID "BAD THINGS" ABOUT BOTH THE U.S.
AND CHINA, ESPECIALLY CHINA.

5. DURING THE ENSUING CONVERSATION, I SOUGHT TO REASSURE HIM ABOUT THE U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD GUYANA, USING A VARIETY OF ARGUMENTS. HE SAID HE APPRECIATED MY ASSURANCES AND THOSE ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMANN HAD CONVEYED THROUGH WILLS. HE BELIEVED WE WERE TELLING THE TRUTH, BUT ASKED WAS IT NOT POSSIBLE THAT ONE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT NOT KNOW WHAT ANOTHER PART WAS DOING. I REPLIED THAT WAS POSSIBLE, BUT THAT CIRCUMSTANCES WERE SUCH THAT I COULD BE CERTAIN THAT THE USG HAD NO REASON TO DO ANYTHING AGAINST HIM OR HIS GOVERNMENT. BURNHAM THEN SAID THAT THE CUBAN EXILES, HOWEVER, APPARENTLY WANTED TO ATTACK GUYANA BECAUSE HIS GOVERNMENT HAD FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH CUBA.

6. OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S AFRICA INITIATIVE, BURNHAM SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THE SECRETARY HAD ACTED IN GOOD FAITH IN TRYING TO PREVENT A BLOOD-BATH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE REMAINED SKEPTICAL, HOWEVER, OF WHAT WOULD DEVELOP OUT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN IAN SMITH AND THE NATIONALISTS.

7. COMMENT: BURNHAM WAS FRIENDLY THROUGHOUT OUR MEETING. HE APPEARED VERY APPRECIATIVE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHLAUDEMANN'S WORDS TO WILLS AND THANKED ME FOR OUR EFFORTS. I AM SATISFIED THAT WILLS REPORTED ACCURATELY TO BURNHAM CONCERNING
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OUR EARLIER EFFORTS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION CONCERNING THE BOMBING OF THE GUYANESE CONSULATE. THE INITIAL IMPACT OF THE CRASH OF THE CUBAN AIRLINER OFF BARBADOS HAS GIVEN US A SETBACK, BUT ASSUMING AGAIN NOTHING LINKS THE U.S. TO THE CRASH, THE DIALOGUE WE HAVE BEEN MAINTAINING OVER THIS MATTER WILL STRENGTHEN OUR CREDIBILITY AND REDUCE BURNHAM'S CONCERNS.
BLACKEN

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